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15 May 1951

USAF Declass/Release Instructions On File

MEMORANDUM TO: THE BOARD

SUBJECT: USSR CAPABILITIES IN RE/NIE-25

FROM: Col. Barber

1. The USSR is granted, in intelligence estimates, a capability sufficient to justify an attempt to deliver by long-range aircraft their full stockpile of atomic bombs that is or will become available. Against the opposition there currently can be provided by U.S. Air Defense forces, from 70 to 85% of the carriers sorties could be expected to succeed in dropping bombs on a target area. Against the opposition, that currently is being planned to be provided by U. S. Air Defense forces by 1954, from 55 to 78% of the carriers sorties could be expected to succeed in dropping bombs in a target area.

2. Strategic vulnerability studies of the United States indicate that the successful delivery of 238 atomic bombs of the Nagasaki type, upon 205 targets comprising 11 target systems, could in all probability cause the following: -

- a. Loss of 92% of aero-engine productive capacity
- b. " " 76% of tetraethyl lead productive capacity
- c. " " 79% of anhydrous ammonia " "
- d. " " 77% of precision bearings " "
- e. " " 88% of electronic tube " "
- f. " " 82% of steel " "
- g. " " 75% of refined copper " "
- h. " " 74% of alumina " "
- i. A critical interdiction of atomic bomb production
- j. Severe damage, personnel and materiel loss at 44 important military installation
- k. Casualties to 62% of Federal employees, loss of records, and destruction of buildings in governmental agencies important to National Defense.

The basic assumption in this study grants the USSR a capability to deliver this number of bombs within a 90-day period. Under most optimum conditions favoring the defense, an estimated total of 433 (238/0.55) bomb sorties would be necessary. Upon completion of this atomic offensive, a total loss to the USSR of from 30 to 60% in carriers could be expected.

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